

common cemetery for the inhabitants, occasionally divided by a wall, or a deep trench, into compartments assigned to distinct sections of the inhabitants. The difficulty and expense of procuring one fit place for a cemetery are usually great, and must be proportionally greater if more than one were required; and this difficulty is magnified in Oxford by the great scarcity of freehold property in its environs. The decomposition of dead bodies was usually completed before the centre decay of the wood in which they are enclosed; so that the miasmata that escaped slowly from the crevices of the coffin spread gradually upwards, and are as imperceptibly mixed with the atmosphere. If interments are made in clay, the impermeability of this earth to water and air retards the decay both of coffins and the bodies enclosed in them to a length of time inconvenient in a cemetery destined to be the dormitory of successive generations, and in which it is therefore desirable that our bodies should as speedily as possible return to their dust, when the spirit has returned to God, and the body to the earth. Under these circumstances, Dr. Bockland rejected to hear that a negotiation had been opened between the authorities of the city and New College for the exchange of some land which may be convenient for a cemetery on the north of Oxford.

#### LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTE. BRECQN.

##### MR. THOMAS'S LECTURE ON SCULPTURE.

MR. THOMAS having apologized for the seeming presumption of one so young in years venturing publicly to discourse upon so distinguished a subject, commenced his lecture by remarking that the art was coeval with the existence of mankind in a state of society, and that our knowledge of their history and institutions is principally derived from hieroglyphical sculpture; but that, having now become the object of national attention in England, it is making rapid advances to attainable perfection. He was surprised that many should think sculpture alone serviceable as an ornament, and not choose to acknowledge the moral benefit it conferred upon mankind; as, by so doing, they must think that sense, genius, and talent were given to man by chance, and perished with him as did the instinct of brute animals. He thought it was a precious gift bestowed by the Wisdom of Providence for the purpose of continuing the glorious intellect with which man is distinguished. He also thought that the art had an effect in harmonizing the manners and softening the temper; and, although those who were devoted to the luxury and pleasures, and grosser enjoyments of this life, could not properly appreciate these functions, yet, the professors of sculpture returned from their studies to society, with manners polished, and hearts more disposed to feel and reverberate the endearments of social life and reciprocal benevolence. It was an art designed by the All-wise Being to perpetuate the pride of man's reason, and to excite laudable emulation in others. He thought, that as man's imagination is so unbounded, it seemed to instance more clearly than his reason the knowledge of his immortality. Such being the case, those who excited the imagination to noble thoughts—the painter, the poet, or the sculptor, who, by their works, tended to raise man to a higher state of being, were, themselves, of a more exalted nature, and held intercourse with more exalted powers, and ought to be distinguishedly placed amongst the benefactors of the human race. He instanced many who sought to depress man into a state of debasement, by leveling him with the inferior animals, but was indignant at their presumption; and said it was the duty and interest of all, who attempted the moralization of man, to show him that he is of more dignity than to rank with brutes, and that being designed by Providence for future happiness, it was his duty to cultivate virtue, truth, and honour. He then proceeded to say, that having shown the moral benefits conferred by the arts, he begged to recommend the study of drawing to all, as it was not only a graceful and agreeable employment, but one of actual utility; for it frequently occurs, that in our descriptions of things we find words inadequate to convey a correct idea, when a few strokes of the pencil would elucidate the whole at a glance. He instanced many who had travelled far and long, who had viewed dangers and seen wonders, to bring

home journals, and after all, the best part of the story is untold; and all for want of a pennyworth of Indian ink, properly distributed over a few scraps of paper. He afterwards proceeded to compare the effect of the different liberal arts upon the human passions, and first cited the opinion of a writer of much credit, to the effect, that a sculptor, to become a worthy one, must possess many liberal arts, and be also a curious artificer, whereby he becomes superior to those possessed of but one. This being the case, when so many influences were wanted, he would not hesitate in affirming that the works of an Angelo were equal to merit to the blind of Homer—the *Enid* of Virgil—the historical writings of a Thucydides and a Livy—the orations of Demosthenes and Tully—the *Paradise Lost* of Milton—the *Macbeth* of Shakspeare—or the *Messiah* of Handel. He then spoke in high and flowing terms of poetry, and proceeded in a strain of eloquence to illustrate its charms and its beauties—its tendency to support virtue and good actions—in captivating powers, and its pleasant illusions; and yet, with all these graces, he proved that his own favourite art had one transcendent advantage—and that is, that it gratifies the sight—the most pleasant sense we possess, for we see that which is only described by the poet. He for some time proceeded with the argument, and concluded by putting the subject to the judgment of the audience, by asking who would not prefer seeing the *Alexander* of Apelles; in the character of Jupiter, to reading Shakspeare's beautiful description of Demetrius the King? After giving some interesting anecdotes of the influence of sculpture on Julius Cæsar, Publius Scipio, and Quintus Fabius, which tended to prove the vast superiority of the art, that it had an enlivening which kindles in the human heart higher feelings—feelings which fully corroborate its kindred to Heaven,—he proceeded to go through a regular analysis of the processes used in the mechanical part of sculpture, and the clear and concise manner in which they were elucidated, proved that the lecturer was quite at home with the subject. Mechanical aid is brought to bear upon the marble, and the province of the master-mind is chiefly to execute in clay or wax a model of the intended work; and after the painter has completed his labours, to bring the resources of his mind and genius into play for the production of these wonderful specimens, which exalt his labours to such a high rank, and which, said he, "forms the true aristocracy of nature, for Lord can be stamped on any clay, but inspiration only on the truest metal." The spectator, contemplating this wonder, rising as if reluctantly from a shapless mass, through the enchanting wand of a magician, cannot help involuntarily exclaiming, as the illustrious Michael Angelo did to his Moses, "Speak, speak, if thou canst."

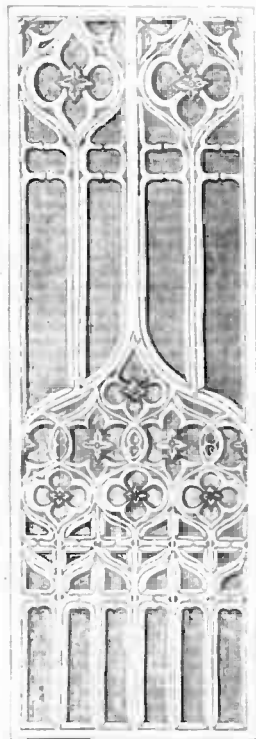
He then entered into a comparison between sculpture and its sister art—painting. He next gave the history of sculpture from its earliest period to the present day, reviewing in succession the wonderful works given to the world by the Egyptians, and the sculptors of Greece and Italy, concluding with a tribute to the departed genius of our most celebrated modern artists—Canova and Chantrey. He likewise interspersed this historical sketch with reflections on the influence which the fine arts had upon the glory of the great nations who cherished them.

He then thought not out of place to mention the high estimation in which some of the celebrated painters were held by the Emperor Charles V. and Francis I. of France, and related some very pleasing anecdotes in proof of the same. He afterwards alluded to the quality called genius, and hoped none would think application was unnecessary, because they fancied they possessed this intuitive excellence; and enumerated all the studies and qualifications the student must go through, and be possessed of, before he can properly carry out the minutie of the conceptions of his brain; and in support of his assertion quoted the great Michael Angelo, who encourages every student to soar as high as his competitors, and obtain that fame which cannot be purchased by the riches of Mexico and Peru. For this purpose the splendid works of the ancients should be resorted to, and after becoming conversant with those specimens of

dignified inhumanity, the student will be able to form a style peculiar to himself. He then proceeded to give a detailed account of the Royal Academy of London, which was highly entertaining, and proved it to be a well-regulated institution, and greatly conducive to the promotion of art in Great Britain. He apologized for treating the subject in such a general manner, and would have kept himself more particularly to sculpture, had he not thought the plan he had adopted would be more interesting to the generality of his audience. He concluded with fervent wishes that the principle may also become famous in future ages for its encouragement of arts which have so pleasing an influence on society.

The lecturer then sat down, after occupying the attention of his audience for the space of nearly one hour and a half, having been frequently interrupted by bursts of applause, which were renewed at the conclusion.

#### GOthic WOOD CARVING.



Elevation.

Plan.

#### TO THE EDITOR OF THE BUILDER.

SIR,—I beg your acceptance of the above sketch, which I trust you will deem worthy of a corner in your excellent paper; it is one of the panels in the pulpit of the Priory Church, Brecqn, and is valuable as an interesting relic of that beautiful style of wood carving so much in practice with our ancestors in church decoration, but which, it is to be greatly lamented, occurs so rarely in the present day. It is worked in 14 inch stuff, and lined with green cloth, which as a ground forms a pleasing contrast to the rich colour of the oak.

Trusting that the style may speedily be revived, I am, Sir, your obedient servant,  
J. L. T.